
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 40 (File 153, as amended by Senate “A” and “B”)*

AN ACT CONCERNING COLLEGE READINESS AND COMPLETION.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) and the community-technical colleges (CTC), beginning by the 2014 fall semester, to offer (1) certain students remedial support embedded with the corresponding entry level course in a college-level program and (2) certain other students an intensive college readiness program. It generally prohibits other forms of remedial education after that time.

The bill also requires public high schools, CSUS, and CTC to align their curricula by the fall semester of 2016. Beginning by the 2014-2015 school year, it requires early assessment of eighth and tenth grade students’ college readiness and the sharing of such results. Lastly, it requires a report on (1) the transition of working adults to higher education and (2) the bill’s impact on CSUS and CTC programs for deaf and hearing-impaired students.

*Senate Amendment “A” (1) adds the exception for non-embedded remedial support, (2) adds certain consultation requirements, (3) removes a provision requiring open access to college level courses for students graduating from high school in or after May 2014, (4) delays, from 2014 to 2016, the required deadline for curricular alignment, (5) adds the reporting requirement concerning working adults, and (6) makes technical changes.

*Senate Amendment “B” eliminates the bill’s applicability to UConn and Charter Oak State College, adds the provision concerning programs for deaf and hearing-impaired students, and makes technical changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2012

REMEDIAL SUPPORT

This bill requires CSUS and CTC, beginning by the 2014 fall semester, to offer certain students remedial support embedded with the corresponding entry level course in a college-level program. They must offer this support (1) to students who they determine, through use of multiple commonly accepted measures of skill level, are likely to succeed in college level work with supplemental support and (2) during the same semester as, and in conjunction with, the entry level course.

For students determined to be below the skill level needed for success in college-level work, the bill requires CSUS and CTC, beginning by the 2014 fall semester, to offer an intensive college readiness program before the next semester (presumably the semester after the determination is made). It requires these students to complete the intensive readiness program before receiving embedded remedial support. The Board of Regents for Higher Education (BOR) must develop options for such a program in consultation with its faculty advisory committee and the state's P-20 Council (see BACKGROUND).

The bill generally prohibits CSUS and CTC, beginning by the 2014 fall semester, from offering remedial support or courses not embedded with an entry level course or part of an intensive readiness program. However, it allows institutions to offer a student one semester of non-embedded remedial support if (1) it is intended to advance the student toward a degree and (2) the program is approved by BOR.

CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT

The bill requires public high schools and CSUS and CTC to align their curricula by the fall semester of 2016. The alignment must enable the successful completion of high school mathematics and language arts curricula, as described in Connecticut's common core state standards (see BACKGROUND), to be the indicator of college readiness. CSUS and CTC may use available evaluation instruments to assess the college readiness of adults enrolling in higher education after spending time in the workforce.

Beginning by the 2014-2015 school year, the bill requires BOR, in consultation with the P-20 Council, to ensure that each CSUS and CTC institution works with the state Department of Education and local and regional school districts to (1) use available evaluation methods to assess eighth and tenth grade students' college readiness and (2) share the results with students, parents or legal guardians, and schools.

REPORT

The bill requires BOR, in consultation with the P-20 Council, to report to the Higher Education Committee by the fall semester of 2014 regarding its recommendations concerning the successful transition of adults returning to or first enrolling in a higher education program at CSUS or CTC after spending time in the workforce. The report must also address the bill's implications for CSUS or CTC programs for deaf and hearing-impaired students.

BACKGROUND

P-20 Council

The P-20 council is a statewide council of educators, business leaders, and civic officials created to build stronger ties among educators and policymakers at all levels of education. It was established in 2009 by Governor Rell in Executive Order 2A.

Common Core State Standards

The common core state standards are a set of state K-12 education standards for English language arts and mathematics developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. The standards, which states may voluntarily adopt, seek to raise student achievement and provide more uniform curricula and instruction among states. The State Board of Education adopted the standards in July 2010.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 18 Nay 0 (03/13/2012)

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 38 Nay 0 (04/18/2012)